



# PLANC Points

## Newsletter of the Pre-Law Advisors National Council [PLANC.org](http://PLANC.org)

Spring/Summer 2023

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# Regional Pre-Law Advising Associations



**Midwest Association of Pre-Law Advisors**  
([MAPLA](#))



**Northeast Association of Pre-Law Advisors**  
([NAPLA](#))



Pacific Coast  
Association of Pre-Law Advisors  
— — — — —  
Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington

**Pacific Coast Association  
of Pre-Law Advisors**  
([PCAPLA](#))



**Southern Association of Pre-Law Advisors**  
([SAPLA](#))



**Southwest Association of Pre-Law  
Advisors** ([SWAPLA](#))

Southwest Association of Prelaw Advisors



**Western Association  
of Prelaw Advisors**

**Western Association of  
Pre-Law Advisors** ([WAPLA](#))

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# Upcoming Regional APLA Conferences

- [SWAPLA - July 11-13 2023, Dallas, Texas](#)
- [MAPLA - September 21- September 23 2023, Chicago, Illinois](#)
- [SAPLA - November 1-3 2023, Atlanta, Georgia](#)

*Congratulations to [NAPLA](#), [PCAPLA](#) & [WAPLA](#) on holding successful 2023 conferences!*

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## The Legal Industry is Expanding; Now is the Time to Broaden Your Advising

By Leslie Oster, Director, Master of Science in Law Program, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law

The current legal landscape reveals a number of staffing trends that point to a need for a new kind of professional: one with significant technical or subject matter expertise, but also an understanding of law and the legal industry.

According to the Thomson Reuters Institute's [2023 Report on the State of the Legal Market](#), many law firms and businesses have ramped up hiring for high-level functional roles that interact with legal but don't require JD training – such as practice group operations, executive management, and business development. These positions require an understanding of law and how the legal system operates, but they also require a variety of other skills related to the business of law, including project management, accounting and finance, quantitative reasoning, negotiations, and knowledge of technology and AI.

As a primary point of contact for students seeking advice about how to pursue their potential interest in law, prelaw advisors have a significant opportunity to help create a new pipeline of candidates to ultimately fill these “legal plus” roles.

### **Legal Master's Degree: A New Frontier**

With more than 100 U.S. law schools now awarding legal master's degrees, this form of legal education represents a new frontier that is changing the legal landscape. Legal master's degrees provide the opportunity for students to learn about law and the legal industry in a way that prepares them for a variety of intersectional jobs. In law, there is a

growing opportunity for different types of legal professionals – law is becoming more similar to medicine, where multiple types of medical professionals create efficiencies in the healthcare system.

"This is an exciting time in the practice of law," said Wendy Rubas, Chief Legal Officer for legal consultancy Working Smarter, during a [symposium keynote address](#) for the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law's [Master of Science in Law](#) program. The legal industry, she said, needs employees who are well-versed in a variety of technical areas in addition to the law. "They need scientists. They need technologists. They need people with different training and background."

### **CLOs and Legal Leaders Need Emerging Expertise**

Ms. Rubas is not alone in her call to expand the definition of who fits in the legal industry. Many chief legal officers (CLOs) have seen their own roles expand over time, according to the Association of Corporate Counsel's (ACC) [2023 Legal Officers Survey](#), as their departments are now taking on more complex business functions in compliance, ethics, privacy, risk, government affairs, and more.

How do CLOs staff their legal departments when the skills they need go beyond traditional JD training? Legal master's graduates are a great place to start.

### **What's Different About a Legal Master's Degree?**

Legal master's graduates often have the intersectional knowledge and problem-solving skills to thrive in roles that converge with business, policy, and tech; indeed, the curricula in many legal master's programs are specifically designed to expose students to a multifaceted combination of skills essential in the rapidly evolving business of law. [Take a look](#) at the curriculum at Northwestern's MSL program and you will see a variety of courses not present in most JD curricula, such as business strategy, accounting and finance, project management, data science, global product development, regulatory compliance, and many more.

As legal master's programs continue to produce graduates with new and multifaceted skill sets, legal managers will find more ways to utilize these well-rounded employees who understand both law and business, and who can communicate and operate across disciplines. Expanding the types of students who study law has multiple benefits – for the students who will do this interesting work, for diversifying and strengthening the legal profession, and for enhancing efficiencies in business.

### **A New Gateway to Law School**

The legal industry is changing, and this creates myriad new opportunities for students seeking interesting professional lives. By incorporating information



about legal master's programs into their advising toolkits, prelaw advisors can help their advisees successfully navigate the new landscape of legal education and the legal industry.

*Leslie Oster is the Director of the Master of Science in Law program at Northwestern's Pritzker School of Law.*

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## **PLANC 2024 is a Geaux!**



**We missed you in 2020 and invite you to join us for [PLANC 2024](#) in historic New Orleans, Louisiana!**



***Join us in NOLA June 10-13, 2024 when we will be:***

**[Predicting Pre-Law in the Age of...](#)**

**...Growing Focus on Wellbeing and the Whole Student**

**...New Visions for Careers and Career Planning**

**...Re-Energized Diversity & Inclusion Efforts**

**...Testing the Waters: Exposure & Experience Before Law School**

**...Next Steps: Special Topics not Clearly Aligned with Other Tracks**

**...The Truly Unpredictable: Emerging or Hot Topics that weren't on your Bingo Card 1 Year Out!**

***Go to the all-new website today at [PLANC.org](https://planc.org) for conference details including early info about:***

- The **Hotel** and **Registration options** (opening later this Autumn)
- The “**Call for Proposals**” (starting July 10<sup>th</sup>)
- Conference **Sponsorships** (live NOW)
- **Resources** with information about New Orleans



***In-between, be sure to follow PLANC 2024 on social media and like/share the posts with your colleagues!***

**[Instagram](#)**

**[LinkedIn](#)**



**We can't wait to see you next June in New Orleans -**

***Laissez les bons temps rouler!***

**- the PLANC 2024 Planning Team**

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